

FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

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QUOTES SEYMOUR HERSH

FRANK QUITUS: Author Seymour Hersh says an agent for the Central Intelligence Agency misled the planners of the ill-starred 1968 attack on Mylai by telling them they would find a Viet Cong battalion there. The agent denies it. The assault units met only old men, women and children in the South Vietnamese village. Many were killed by the American troops.

Hersh, who won a Pulitzer Prize for breaking the Mylai story, identifies the agent in a new book as Robert Ramsdell, now a private investigator in Orlando, Florida.

Hersh writes in Cover Up, published today by Random House, Ramsdell refused to speak specifically about the information he provided Task Force Barker before the Mylai 4 operation, but acknowledged that his intelligence undoubtedly was a factor in the planning for the mission.

In a telephone interview with the Associated Press, Ramsdell denied Hersh's allegations. He said that although he was working for the CIA in the Mylai area at the time of the killings, he had nothing to do with intelligence reports to the Americans.

CIA and Mercenary Air Forces

CIA and local Asian air forces are playing a growing role in the air war as the Administration seeks to minimize overt American involvement. There is abundant documentation pointing to the participation of these air forces in opium smuggling as well as in combat. (See Ramparts, 4/71 for a fuller account.)

Local Asian air forces--supplied, maintained and directed by American "advisors"--are doing an increasing amount of the bombing. The size of the Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) has increased dramatically, and the Royal Lao Air Force (RLAF), the Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF), and the Cambodian Air Force at slower rates. Although all the aircraft are piloted by Asians, Americans do everything else, from directing bomb loading to spotting for strikes.

Air America and Continental Airlines, privately owned, profit-making companies, operate under CIA direction and wage much of the supportive air war in Laos and Cambodia. The "charter" companies' planes perform troop transport and supply functions, spot for bombers, and engage in rescue operations for downed pilots. Air Force helicopters, helicopter gunships and giant C-130 cargo planes are "rented" to Air America for \$1 a year in Laos.

ASIAN AIR FORCES

American aid to VNAF, FY 1970-72: \$922 million
American aid to RLAF, FY 1970-72: \$128 million
(DoD, CR, 8/3/71)

"The Nixon Doctrine . . . was premised on the assumption . . . of increased U.S. military assistance."
(Undersecy. of State U. Alexis Johnson, FY 1972 DoD Authorization Hearings).

"An important factor in carrying out the Nixon Doctrine will be our military assistance program. We are requesting 48 million for development and 70.4 million for procurement of the International Fighter. In addition, we are requesting 10 million for initial spares. This aircraft is needed to provide an air defense capability for [our] Asian allies."
(Secy. of Air Force Robert C. Seamans, FY 1972 Senate DoD Appropriations Hearings)

Sen. Symington: "Are we going to continue to put these billions into Southeast Asia? Is that the overall plan in the U.S. today?"

Secy. Seamans: "For the foreseeable future we are going to continue to spend sizeable dollars in Southeast Asia."
(Ibid.)

VIETNAMESE AIR FORCE

"South Vietnamese military officers continue to deal in large quantities of heroin and to transport it around South Vietnam in military aircraft."

(Rep. Robert H. Steele, House Subcommittee on Europe, 7/7/71)

"The South Vietnamese Air Force is the sixth largest air force in the world."
(Michael Meyer, Post, 1/11/72)

VNAF INVENTORY

Year	Fixed Wing Attack Aircr.	Heli- copters	Total, inc. Cargo, recon.
1/69	approx. 100	approx. 125	approx. 575
1/72	(total FW & heli. 750+)		1,000+
1/73*	300-400	500-600	1,200

*projected
(1969 and 1973 figures, Cornell study.
1972 figures, DoD)

VNAF PERSONNEL

1968:	20,000 (slightly under)
1972 (Jan.):	45,000
1973*:	50,000

*projected
(Ibid.)

VNAF ATTACK SORTIES

Year	Indochina	Laos	Cambodia
1968	2,250/mo.	none	none
1970	3,150/mo.	none	820
1971*	3,490/mo.	40	1,100

*as of July, 1971
(Cornell study)

"Mr. Seamans acknowledged that the Vietnamese 'will never be able to build the capability to do all that the United States Air Force has been doing in Laos. The Vietnamese Air Force . . . does not possess either B-52s or F-4s, the jet planes that do most of the trail bombing, and there are no plans,' Mr. Seamans said, 'to give it any.'"
(Craig Whitney, NYT, 12/6/71)

"VNAF is being geared to fight a war where it will continue to have complete air superiority." [This superiority will apparently be provided by U.S. aircraft operating from Thailand and carriers in the South China Sea.]

(Brig. Gen. Kendall S. Young, chief Air Force officer for Vietnamization)

Gen. Ryan: "They will not be able to supplant the complete U.S. Air Force in South Vietnam."

Sen. Case: "At any time?"

Gen. Ryan: "That is correct."

(Gen. John D. Ryan, Air Force Chief of Staff, Senate FY 1972 DoD Appropriations Hearings)

ASIAN BLOOD, AMERICAN MONEY

"Lao T-28 bombers have attacked towns, Saravane being a well-known case in point. . . Laos Air Force pilots are . . . paid a bonus for each sortie so that there is an incentive not to adhere strictly to the rules of engagement [forbidding random bombing]."

(Senate Foreign Relations Committee Staff Report on Laos, 4/71)

"There is a growing concern of the tendency of Laotian air force pilots from Luang Prabang and Long Cheng to dump their bomb loads on unauthorized targets, which is confirmed by U.S. military personnel. Only minutes after taking off the pilots reportedly hurry home to reload--and collect a dollar bonus for every sortie they fly. The indiscriminate bombing is causing loss of life on the ground and forcing villagers to flee their homes."

(D.E. Ronk, Far Eastern Economic Review, 9/4/71)

"The VNAF bomb villages indiscriminately. They don't care where they bomb. A lot of times they'll wipe out a village because they or their commander has a grudge against it, maybe it wouldn't make the proper payoffs." (Ronald Ridenhour, former G.I. whose insistent prodding broke the My Lai story, in a PAW interview)

CIA AIR FORCES

"There is a large U.S. civilian (paramilitary) fleet operating in Laos run by Air America, Continental Air and Lao Air Transport . . . under contract with AID, although funds are provided by AID, the DoD, CIA, and the State Department. The funding arrangements are worked out in Washington."

(Foreign Relations Committee Staff Report on Laos, 4/71)

"Air America is under the management of George Dole, a CIA employee. . . . He is looking to the future, carefully developing the airlift capabilities of other companies he runs."

Transport. . . . The sole purpose for the existence of SAT is that the agency be ready for the contingency that some day it will have to ferry men and material to some Latin American country . . . without of course having to contend with the Congress or anybody else."

(Victor Marchetti, highest ranking CIA official to "go public," a former participant in CIA daily staff meetings chaired by director Richard Helms.)

CIA-DIRECTED AIR FORCES IN LAOS

Inventory

20 helicopters
12 C-123s*
7 C-7As*
10 Porters
7 C-46s
1 Volpar

Estimated Cost

FY 1970: \$23 million
FY 1971: \$26.2 million

Personnel

Air America: 276-415

(Senate Foreign Relations Committee Staff Report on Laos, 4/71)

"The CIA has changed its rules in an attempt to stop the use of its private airline, Air America, for transport of drugs [opium and heroin] in Laos. Although only two months ago CIA director Richard Helms adamantly denied there had been any agency involvement in this traffic, he is now said to have told a secret Congressional hearing that there was involvement but it has stopped." (Flora Lewis, Post, 7/23/71)

"The CIA has involved us in this covert operation, an opium war. The clandestine yet official operations of the U.S. government could be aiding and abetting heroin traffic here at home." (Sen. John Tunney in a campaign speech before the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce)

"John E. Ingersoll, director of the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, in testimony before the House Select Committee on Crime, said that middle-level government officials and military men throughout Southeast Asia were deeply involved in the traffic in opium, the product from which morphine and heroin is refined." (Felix Belair, NYT, 6/6/71)

continued

AIR WAR

THE THIRD INDOCHINA WAR

A HANDBOOK PREPARED BY
PROJECT AIR WAR AND THE INDOCHINA RESOURCE CENTER
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Project Air War and the Indochina Resource Center are projects of the Indochina Education Council which was established by agencies of the United Church of Christ, the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., and the United Methodist Church to help meet the crucial need for informing the American people about the ongoing war in Indochina.

PROJECT AIR WAR

PROJECT AIR WAR is one of the major information centers in the country studying and analyzing the ongoing war, a conflict which has escalated in the air even as U.S. foot-soldiers have been withdrawn. The Project provides both authoritative statistical data about today's automated war and a tragic picture of what life is like for hundreds of thousands of Indochinese peasants living under constant bombing.

Project material has already appeared in The New York Times, Washington Post, Time, Boston Globe, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, San Francisco Chronicle, Congressional Record, CBS and NBC national news, the Mutual Radio network, transcripts of Congressional hearings, and a wide variety of other publications.

Project staff members speak at community meetings, college campuses, and academic gatherings; are called upon frequently by congressional offices and media representatives for background information; and work closely with several national peace groups.

INDOCHINA RESOURCE CENTER

The INDOCHINA RESOURCE CENTER serves as an independent clearinghouse for information on contemporary Indochina. The Center incorporates nine general sponsors from the academic community and sixteen academic associates who provide a wide range of inputs.

The Center provides reliable, up-to-date information from specialists on the social, economic, cultural, political, and historical realities of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. This information, which is often otherwise unavailable, is made accessible to Congress, journalists, peace groups, and others concerned with Indochina through the twice-monthly newsletter, Indochina Chronicle, in books and articles, as well as by direct contact. The Center also provides direct answers to specific requests, sets up briefings and seminars, and is currently developing a series of audio-visual exhibits on Indochina for loan.

Cover and following essay by a 29 year old Lao refugee.

"There was a pagoda on the hill right next to my village. The airplanes shot it and started a fire. Two monks were killed there together. On account of the war. The planes thought that there were soldiers in the pagoda so they shot it. But there weren't any. Only the monks died.

--from Voices from the Plain of Jars, ed. by F. Branfman, Harper and Row, 1972. Original collection of essays and drawings by Laotian peasants.

